



# The Maneuver Task Force Commander Expects His S2 to Collect and Deliver

by Major Richard M. Monnard

*"But at my back I always hear Time's winged chariot hurrying near."*

— Andrew Marvell

On today's battlefield, the battalion task force continually operates in a time-constrained environment; however, the Army's technique for planning and preparing for combat has not changed.

The commander remains in charge of the military decisionmaking process (MDMP) and ultimately decides what procedures to use in each situation. From start to finish, the commander's personal role is central: to provide focus and guidance to the staff. The S2, as part of the staff, has one mission — to collect and deliver information that will assist the commander in making decisions. This article provides a quick, yet thorough, technique for task force intelligence officers to organize, prepare, and present intelligence information to the commander and staff.

## Mission Analysis

**Weather analysis.** Most tactical intelligence officers fail to understand the meaning of the word "analysis," which is loosely translated as "so what!" Almost any-

one can recite beginning morning nautical twilight (BMNT) and early evening nautical twilight (EENT), as well as the high and low temperatures for the next 24 hours.

Most maneuver commanders need direct and indirect effects of the light and weather on operations, such as identifying the periods of total darkness and how they will influence enemy reconnaissance, or how temperature changes from day to night of almost 30 degrees can affect soldier endurance for long-range infiltrations or the boresighting of main guns on tanks and Bradleys. This information can be easily portrayed graphically in a bubble chart with bullet comments.

**Terrain analysis.** The most effective way to describe the battlefield and evaluate the military aspects of terrain in an area of operations is still observation and fields of fire, cover and concealment, obstacles, key terrain, and avenues of approach. However, at the task force level, the time-constrained environment does not allow lengthy briefings. Therefore, the S2 should focus on the critical terrain from the line of departure (LD) to the objective. Regardless of whether the task

force is attacking or defending, there is an LD and an objective. The terrain analysis should always include avenues of approach, critical intervisibility (IV) lines, and key terrain. But more importantly, the S2 should focus on the significance of the terrain. For example, "in the north, the distance between this IV line and our objective is 4000 meters. At this distance, antitank fires can range us as we crest the IV line and we cannot return effective fires. However, in the south, the distance is only 1000 meters and we can immediately engage the enemy." The best way to portray this information is by using satellite imagery and Terrabased products.

**Describe the enemy.** The S2 must introduce the commander and staff to the enemy. An enemy composition chart or simple line-and-block chart will suffice. Add to the chart the enemy's key weapons systems and ranges, and identify their strengths and weaknesses, and everyone will understand what they are about to come in contact with.

**Detailed enemy course of action.** The S2 must identify the enemy commander's task, purpose, and decision points by wearing the enemy S3's and command-



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er's shoes. With an understanding of how the task force is going to fight, the intelligence officer can easily develop an accurate and realistic enemy course of action (ECOA). A quick, yet thorough way, to do this is to develop an enemy timeline and course of action (COA) sketch — but the job does not end there. The S2 must answer the five basic interrogatives — who, what, where, when, and most importantly, why. If the S2 fails to explain the task and purpose for each enemy set and describe the scheme of maneuver, the task force will be unable to exploit the enemy's vulnerabilities.

**Recommended priority intelligence requirements (PIR) and high-payoff target (HPT).** More often than not, an S2 recommends PIR that can already be answered, such as the enemy's use of chemical munitions. If you can answer the PIR without reconnaissance or assistance from higher, it is not an intelligence gap. PIR should answer the commander's key questions and should be tied to his decisions. Early on in the MDMP, a few decision points were identified, but regardless of the mission, there are a couple of decisions that will always have to be made: where the best point is to breach the enemy's defense (location, type, and disposition of obstacles, and location and disposition of battle positions); which is the most secure route to the objective; and if the enemy will commit its main effort north or south of Hill 876.

Intelligence officers should also recommend high-value targets (HVT) to the commander for targeting by the task force. Remember, HVTs are assets that the threat commander requires to successfully complete his mission. Additionally,

identifying HVTs early can assist in developing the reconnaissance and surveillance (R&S) plan, as well as focus the entire staff during wargaming. During wargaming, the HVTs will become HPTs as decisions are made as to which ones to attack, based on the friendly concept of the operation and scheme of maneuver.

### COA Development

*"Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted."* — Albert Einstein

**Initial R&S planning.** After the S2 and S3 have received the commander's guidance, they can begin to develop a tentative reconnaissance plan. They are both responsible for planning and preparing the task force plan. Despite the complexity and importance of reconnaissance, most units relegate it to a corner of the tactical operations center. It is here that the night battle captain and the battlefield information control center develop an R&S matrix and named areas of interest (NAI) overlay. Generally, units fail to resource this plan with fires, casualty evacuation, and combat service support. To correct this deficiency, the S2 and S3 must be involved in the process. Success requires a well-written R&S order, as well as a plan for the next operation before the current fight ends.

**Task force COA development.** While the S2 has no formal requirements, at a minimum, he should ensure the arraying of friendly forces is logical versus possible ECOAs, assist with force ratio calculations, and serve as another set of eyes as the task force plan takes shape.

### The Wargame

This is the S2's opportunity to fight the enemy against friendly COA. To do this effectively, several tools must be available, including a blow-up map of the area

## Event Matrix

	24 EENT COA 1	25 BMNT COA 2	25 EENT COA 1	26 BMNT COA 2	26 EENT COA 1
PSOC	Insertion of 1 x CO (-)	Insertion of 1 x CO (-)	Recon	Recon	Recon
T: Recon					
P: Obtain Info					
DIV RECON	5 x BRDM, 2 x V-150	5 x BRDM, 2 x V-150			
T: Route Recon	35 Dismounts	35 Dismounts			
P: Confirm Enemy	Infiltrate in Zone	Infiltrate in Zone			
BDE RECON			7 x BRDM	7 x BRDM	Harass BPs
T: Route Recon			35 Dismounts	35 Dismounts	
P: Confirm Enemy			Infiltrate in Zone	Infiltrate in Zone	
ARTILLERY			RL-21 in Range	RL-21 in Range	
T: Attrit			Chemical Attack	Chemical Attack	
P: Establish POP			6 x 81mm w/Dismnts	6 x 81mm w/Dismnts	
DISMOUNTS			Begin Infiltration	Begin Infiltration	
T: Seize and Clear			3 x Co (100 Pax)	3 x Co (100 Pax)	
P: Pass Mech					
AVIATION	Resupply Flight	Resupply Flight	1300 Recon Flight	1000 Recon Flight	
T: Attack			1700 Air Attack	1500 Air Attack	
P: Pass Mech			2000 Recon Flight	1800 Recon Flight	
ADA				9 x SA-18 w/Dismnts	
T: Destroy					
P: Deny					
ENGINEERS			1 x Pltn w/Dismnts	1 x Pltn w/Dismnts	
T: Breach					
P: Pass Mech					
CRP					
T: Fix					
P: Pass Main Body					
M ATTACK					
T: Destroy					
P: Pass Division					
HPTs	C2, Radars, Hvy Tm, BSA, Aviation AA, FARP	C2, Radars, Hvy Tm, BSA, Aviation AA, FARP	C2, Radars, Hvy Tm, BSA, Aviation AA, FARP	C2, Radars, Hvy Tm, BSA, Aviation AA, FARP	C2, Radars, Hvy Tm, BSA, Aviation AA, FARP

**Figure 1**



of operations (satellite imagery preferred), a replication of enemy assets (pins or stickers), a situation template, ECOA sketches, an enemy timeline, Terrabased products, and an NAI overlay.

The most important thing is that the intelligence officer be an uncooperative enemy and fight — to win! If the S2 rolls over, he is not testing or helping to synchronize the friendly plan. To be effective, he must show and explain to the staff what the enemy will do at critical times and places on the battlefield. The event matrix in Figure 1 is a good tool to use for this.

### The Operations Order

The audience for the operations order (OPORD) is different than mission analysis and requires a different presentation. Since the task force's company commanders have not seen the S2's products, they will be looking for something tailored to their level. Therefore, S2s must focus on the enemy timeline and the five basic interrogatives for each enemy set. By doing this, the company commander walks away with an appreciation of how the enemy is going to fight and with overlays that can be refined for specific zones or sectors.

### The Combined Arms Rehearsal

The S2 must be prepared to discuss any new information that has been obtained since the OPORD. Additionally, he should provide commanders with updated situation templates based on that new information.

The S2's portion of the rehearsal should be briefed using the enemy timeline and event matrix. Again, he should portray an uncooperative enemy that intends to defeat the task force.

### Battle Tracking

**Reconnaissance and surveillance.** Part of battle tracking is understanding the R&S plan and knowing how it is progressing. If the scouts were told to line of

departure (LD) at 1800 hours, and be in position to observe and report on NAI 2 and 3 no later than 2330 hours, then the S2 section should be tracking their movements as well as their reports. Additionally, the S2 needs to track whether or not the commander's PIR have been answered.

**Situation development.** S2s should develop a system to track the enemy during both the attack and the defense. This can be done by individual formation, when the enemy attacks, and by battle position when he defends.

This type of battle tracking and battle damage assessment will allow everyone to see the enemy and assess his strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, it increases the commander's ability to make informed decisions.

### Predictive Analysis

S2s are not just historians who simply disseminate combat information. They make their money by conducting analysis for the commander while he is on the battlefield. Not only can a successful S2 identify what has happened and what is going on at the moment, but also can predict what is going to happen next. To do this, the S2 must take each report of enemy contact and ask what it means. If and when we begin to understand the indicators of enemy actions, we can then inform the commander, XO, and S3 what the enemy's next move will be, so it can be countered.

*"We didn't lose the game, we just ran out of time." — Vince Lombardi*

The battalion task force's key to success is to issue quick and clear orders, parallel plan with higher, adjacent, and subordinate headquarters, and rehearse the plan thoroughly. In the foreseeable future, units will continue to conduct operations in time-constrained environments, and unless each member of the staff modifies their requirements during the MDMP process, they will not accomplish proper coordination and synchronization. The task force intelligence officer plays a critical role in setting the conditions for the entire MDMP. If the S2 is not quick, clear, and concise when he prepares and briefs the intelligence preparation of the battlefield, the entire process can, and will, be severely hindered.



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